

Meeting Notes
SCOPING DISCUSSION FOR HOPI TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN
Moenkopi Legacy Inn and Suites
June 3, 2019

Purpose of Meeting

Andrew Gashwazra convened a meeting focused upon the update of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). A subset of that discussion focused on the development of a Tourism Strategic Plan being funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). Attending the meeting were Andrew Gashwazra, Clayton Hongumtewa, Wallace Youvella, Jr., Edison Tutsi, Margaret Pooyouma, Max Taylor, James Surveyor, Thomas Tso and Brian Cole.

In general, the meeting was a free-flowing, broad-ranging discussion of what elements should be included in a tourism strategic plan that would be of the greatest benefit to the Hopi Tribe and its Villages/communities.

Example Led by New Mexico Relatives

It was generally recognized that the Acoma Tribe is a good example of what could be done at Hopi. One difference is that, in general, the Acoma Pueblo is not occupied year round by residents whereas some/much of the Hopi mesas are occupied (although this is becoming less common). For many Hopi, the homes on the mesas are “cultural homes” that they only utilize for spiritual purposes.

The Acoma and other New Mexico Pueblo Tribes make good use of the internet to showcase their organizational efforts and provide information to visitors about celebrations and events. Information about rules and regulations that govern the activity of visitors are well presented.

Gaining Village Member Support

It is important to gain the understanding and support of Village members before tourism activities are initiated. Conducting an opinion survey at the Village level would be beneficial. This might be done by Northern Arizona University or other universities.

Listing of Existing Events at Hopi

Margaret Pooyouma offered a listing of significant events that are held throughout Hopi on any given year. These events/activities/celebrations include, but are not limited to:

- Tuuvi Gathering – October
- Tuhisma – October
- Sumiunangwa – September
- MNA Hopi Show – July
- Pueblo Revolt Day
- Bacavi Quilt Show
- Hopi Arts and Crafts Guild
- Art Market at Cultural Center
- Winslow – Homaloui
- Hopi Heritage Days at Flagstaff
- Hopi Museum Project
- Annual Louis Tewanema Race – September

Vending Near Hopi Cultural Center

There needs to be a standard set for the activity and nature of goods sold at outdoor vending operations near the Hopi Cultural Center. Hopi needs to ensure that it does not devolve into a “swap meet,” but rather that it always showcases authentic Hopi products.

Arts and Crafts Guild Building

Adjacent to the Hopi Cultural Center is the Guild Building. The building has sat vacant for many years, and is subject to ownership/control/clan issues. It was recommended that discussions related to the future of that building “start over.” At one time, the guild had 400 members and was a great example of an organization that would buy and sell art, train Hopi artisans and provide financial benefit. Replicating that type of activity would still be important today if the organization and jurisdictional issues could be addressed.

Hopi Arts Trail

Upper Moenkopi Village/MDC promotes the Hopi Arts Trail. This is a good example of activity that should be sustained and expanded in the future.

Bacavi Quilt Show

One former event/activity that was highly successful but is no longer active is the Bacavi Quilt Show. One previous issue was that the operations were limited to Village members. It would be recommended that this activity be reestablished allowing all Hopi people to participate.

Outside Funding Sources for Tourism

It was stressed by James Surveyor that there are many federal funding sources to plan and implement tourism improvements for Indian Country. The key thing is to get organized and have a plan. The availability of seed funding (leverage funding) is important as well.

Authenticity of Hopi Product

It was noted that while Old Oraibi is known as the “oldest continuously inhabited settlement in North America,” there are still many cinderblock buildings at Old Oraibi. Old Oraibi has done a good job in recent years of community cleanup and does seem to welcome visitors. And yet there are stories of people that say “I came 400 miles and I’m looking at cinderblock...” Thought needs to be given to the authenticity of the Hopi product.

Importance of Organization

James Surveyor talked about the “lessons learned the hard way” by MDC and how they are in a position to be helpful to all of Hopi. Having a long-term view of tourism product and promotion is critical. Sustaining organizations and separating decisions from the politics of the Tribe is important. Partnerships between the Villages are also needed.

Some of the basics such as restrooms and Wi-Fi and the availability of meals must be considered.

Tourism in Arizona is a \$10.1 billion industry. For Hopi, travelers tend to be arriving more from Las Vegas and Los Angeles than they do Phoenix.

Building a tourism awareness campaign to educate Hopi people of the benefits of tourism would be important.

American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA)

James Surveyor has been involved with AIANTA for the past six years. AIANTA is a national organization that can provide technical assistance and resources to support Tribal tourism activities. An annual conference takes place in September which would be excellent for Hopi tourism advocates to attend.

Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT)

AOT is very active in Indian Country. Dawn Melvin is very familiar with Hopi tourism. The AOT website has information on Arizona tourism impacts.

Blue Canyon

The group then had a discussion about the Blue Canyon area. It is widely recognized that Blue Canyon is an area of significant natural beauty and cultural importance to the Hopi people. An opportunity does exist to develop and promote the area, but there has always been concern about the need to preserve the resource. The group discussed ways in which proper development could preserve the cultural resource while creating a recreational opportunity and creating public safety benefit.

Overarching Marketing Goal

James Surveyor suggested that it would be worthwhile to “promote a united Hopi tourism product.” There was a general agreement that one outcome of the tourism strategic plan should strive toward this goal.

FMCV Vendor Village

Wallace Youvella indicated that one of the development priorities for FMCV is a vendor village which would be regulated and marketed. He compared that vision to the vendor facility at the “All Pueblo” Cultural Center in Albuquerque.

Tourism Websites

Andrew Gashwazra showed some of the existing tourism-related websites that are currently online. The group agreed that maintaining and updating websites was of critical concern.

Future Scoping Meeting and Key Contacts

In addition to the attendees at the meeting, the group agreed that it would be good to involve Berni Navakuku, Phyllis Wittsell, Lamar (manager of the Hopi Cultural Center), Gloria (a Hopi planner) and Lenora (coordinates the Hopi Heritage Festival at Flagstaff for HTEDC).